REMARKS BY COMMISSIONER FOR PEACE AND SECURITY ON THE VALIDATION OF THE AFRICAN UNION CONTINENTAL RESULTS FRAMEWORK FOR MONITORING AND REPORTING ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY AGENDA IN AFRICA.

DELIVERED BY ALHAJI SARJOH BAH, HEAD, CRISIS MANAGEMENT AND POST-CONFLICT RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT

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Allow me, Chair, on behalf of the Commissioner for Peace and Security, Ambassador Smail Chergui to put on record our deep appreciation to the Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security for the timely convening of this important meeting and for her continued support in fostering the Continent's Women, Peace and Security agenda. Due to other pressing commitments, Commissioner Chergui could not join us for this meeting. However, he mandated me to deliver this statement on his behalf.

**Distinguished Guests**

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

I would like commend the Office of the Special Envoy for the development of the Continental Results Framework for Monitoring and Reporting on the Implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in Africa. This document would go a long way in enhancing our collective efforts to realize
the objective of Silencing the Guns by 2020 by among things, serving as a tool that we can use to guide our engagements and provide us with a basis to reflect on progress, opportunities and challenges. Such reflections will ensure that our programs and activities are anchored on and guided by the principles of inclusivity, justice and equality.

Let me at the outset reaffirm the commitment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union and the Peace and Security Department who have continuously strived to advance the Women Peace and Security Agenda in Africa. You will recall that at its 223rd meeting on 30 March 2010, the PSC recommended, amongst other, the appointment of a Special Envoy on Women and children in armed conflict, and to devote annually an open Session dedicated to Women and Children in armed conflicts.

As you are aware, in 2014, the AU Chairperson appointed a special envoy for Women, Peace and Security in the person of my sister, Bineta Diop. In addition, the PSC has institutionalized both the open session dedicated to Women and Children in armed conflict and the open session related to the Commemoration of the UNSCR 1325 of October 2000. These formal platforms provide the opportunity for the AU Member States to assess the progress made and to identify gaps and challenges in the implementation of UN Resolution 1325 and related resolutions, as well as the continental commitments on Women Peace and Security Agenda. I am convinced that the Continental Results Framework that will be presented to you will emerge as a critical pillar of our broader continental gender architecture, and would assist us to track progress by highlighting opportunities and challenges.

Fully cognizant of the centrality of its mandate and the need to engage women as pivotal actors in the peace and stabilization efforts in Africa, the Peace and Security Department (PSD) launched the Gender, Peace and
Security Programme in 2015 with the aim of developing effective strategies to advance the Women Peace and Security agenda. The GPSP is aimed at mainstreaming gender into the African Peace and Security Architecture in order to take into account men’s and women’s experiences and potentialities in building secure and stable societies. In so-doing, the GPSP enhances dialogue around women’s effective participation in peace and security in Africa, protection in time of conflict and recognition of the women’s role in post-conflict, reconstruction and development.

In a further demonstration of its commitment to advancing the Women Peace and Security Agenda in Africa, the Peace and Security Council took a landmark decision on 13 March 2017 by mandating the establishment of the Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation (FemWise-Africa). FemWise is aimed, among others, at supporting women’s participation and influence in peace processes at all levels; professionalizing the role of women in preventive diplomacy and mediation; and at strengthening its mediation interventions with the facilitation of Quick Impact Projects and the establishment of local and national peace infrastructures as foundations and launchpads for medium and longer term initiatives that will ensure that stability and development take root. I am pleased to inform you that the operational modalities of FemWise have been adopted, and in the not too distant future, members of FemWise will be deployed to complement some of our preventive and peacemaking efforts in several Member States.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Distinguished Guests

A number of normative frameworks have been provided to guarantee the promotion and protection of the rights of women globally. Among these is UN
Resolution 1325 that seeks to protect women from conflict related gender based violence, calls for the full participation of women in peace processes and promotes gender responsive resolution of conflicts. Thirteen years after the adoption of Resolution 1325, the UN adopted Resolution 2122 that calls for stronger measures of monitoring progress made in the implementation of Resolution 1325. Ladies and Gentlemen, these two Resolutions are part of a set of instruments that has been adopted to guarantee the protection of women and ensure that their potential and contributions to socio-economic development, peace and security are recognized and harnessed.

On the African continent, we have also adopted a considerable set of legal and normative frameworks for the promotion and protection of women’s rights. Gender equality is recognized as one of the foundational principles of the Constitutive Act. The Maputo Protocol, which like the UN’s Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) protects and promotes women’s rights; but, goes further to be the first and perhaps only instrument that recognizes and protects women against the scourge of HIV and AIDS among others. In 2004, our leaders reaffirmed their commitment to the gender equality agenda through a Solemn Declaration that among others, call for the institutionalization of gender in ministries, the effective participation of women in all processes, including peace processes and a commitment to reporting.

While recognizing and commending Member States that have developed National Action Plans, the effective implementation of UNSCR 1325 and subsequent resolutions has been weak despite the existence of a strong normative framework conducive to the promotion of the Women Peace and Security agenda. There already exist a number of mechanisms globally and on the continent for monitoring the progress of implementation of women’s rights instruments. So, what is the added value of the Continental Results Based
Framework? This instrument is not just a monitoring tool. First, it is a framework to monitor progress made by member states on all the commitments made on women’s rights. As a result, member states have a set of indicators with which can be used to track and monitor progress for reporting on their gender commitments to the various reporting mechanisms globally, continentally, regionally and even nationally to legislative institutions. Secondly the CRF provides a mechanism for self-assessment; as much as it offers the opportunity to report to external stakeholders, it also offers a mirror for governments and Civil Society Organisations to look within to assess progress, challenges and opportunities. Thirdly and very importantly, the CRF provides a platform for dialogue within member states and between member states and various strategic audiences such as the African Union.

The CRF also offers an opportunity for the African Union Commission and the Regional Economic Communities to also track and monitor the extent to which our work is gender responsive and how we can enhance the implementation of the various instruments in our own lines of work. It will help us measure the extent to which our commitments to the legal and normative frameworks reflect in mandates for peace support operations and special political missions; in post conflict reconstruction and development and in preventive diplomacy and peacebuilding interventions.

At the Peace and Security Department, we have, through the interdepartmental taskforce of PCRD, developed a Commission-Wide Results Based Framework that sets out the AU’s strategic objectives for PCRD, identifies relevant interventions and links them to outcomes and results that support the realization of the identified objectives. In doing this, there was a conscious and deliberate effort to ensure that the Framework is gender responsive. The CRF offers us an additional set of indicators to gauge how well we are doing and what more can be done.
In view of the foregoing, the Continental Results Framework reaffirms our commitments and strengthen AU efforts to implement and monitor all our efforts aimed at enhancing the women, peace and security agenda. With its emphasis on the development and strengthening of national capacities to deliver and the AU Commission’s broader efforts, the CRF would enhance the development of national statistical capacity and public financial management, which are critical to advancing empirically sound and financially feasible approach for delivering on this agenda.

Therefore, it’s our belief that your deliberations on the Continental Framework will greatly contribute to the development of a coherent agenda between Member States, the regions and the continent. If implemented properly, the continental framework, will contribute significantly to an enhanced dialogue and engagement with AU Member States and Regional Economic Communities on accelerating implementation, as well as better informing the AU’s engagement with international interlocutors and partners on the Women, Peace and Security agenda in Africa. Moreover, it will advance our collective efforts to silence the Guns by 2020 as it provides us with a rigorous framework to assess our policies, programs and activities relating to the structural approach to addressing issues related to women, peace and security.

I wish you fruitful deliberations and would like to declare this meeting open.

Thank you for your kind attention.